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Allegheny  
National  
Forest

## Marketing To Increase Camping Use

*This recommended action plan, if adopted, could significantly effect the viability of the camping program on the Forest for years to come.*



Clemson University Outdoor  
Recreation Short Course  
Gary W. Kell  
1986

**MARKETING**  
**TO INCREASE CAMPING USE**

Gary W. Kell  
Landscape Architect  
Allegheny National Forest  
P.O. Box 847  
Warren, PA 16365  
(814) 723-5150

Clemson Class of 1986  
June 15, 1987

This paper was prepared as a student project in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Professional Development for Outdoor Recreation Management program at Clemson University. It in no way reflects USDA Forest Service policy nor are the opinions expressed those of any one other than the author.

## ABSTRACT

Utilization of the fee campgrounds on the Allegheny National Forest is far below capacity. Camping use has been on a slight decline since the early 70's. Forest managers are concerned for what the future may bring. What can be done? The field of marketing is seen as a possible solution to this perplexing problem.

Examples of how to complete a successful marketing plan for National Forest campgrounds are available. Another example does not seem necessary. What is needed is a strategy to make marketing part of our everyday thinking. Unless it's made part of our current planning process and applied systematically to the entire camping problem on the Forest, the results will only be short term.

This paper describes the various marketing orientations, the marketing activities, and compares marketing to our current project planning process. It explores four alternatives for implementing marketing Forest-wide to solve the camping use problem. The recommendation to adopt a market orientation includes an action plan. If implemented, it could significantly affect the viability of the camping program on the Forest for years to come.

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# Introduction

## Camping Situation

Camping participation has increased and is expected to continue to increase at national and state levels. The Allegheny National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) indicates that three of the major campgrounds around the Allegheny Reservoir are filled to near capacity on most weekends throughout the primary camping season. If more space for this type of camping were available, it would be used. Therefore, the Forest Plan sets direction on increasing facilities.

In spite of these specific campgrounds, use is nearly 80% below full capacity in the remaining eight campgrounds where fees are charged. Recreation managers want to increase utilization of the existing facilities and provide more benefits for the public.

More disturbing is the general decline in use -- almost 20% in the last ten years. This is occurring in spite of an increasing overall demand nationwide.

Why? Is it increased competition? Is there a decrease in user satisfaction? Don't potential campers know about camping here? Forest Plan direction does not provide for a means to assess existing campground use or user satisfaction. Managers in search of answers to these and similar recreation management problems have turned to the field of marketing for a possible solution. This is evidenced in the Forest Service by such recent promotional efforts as Room-to-Roam; and in the private sector through the myriad of articles and research related to marketing for non-profit organizations.

## Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to encourage management to assess marketing and to recommend an action plan to implement it forest-wide. It is not intended to show how marketing actually works by applying it to a specific area. Examples of successful marketing

strategies accomplishing such objectives on a small scale are available. Many are the result of the Recreation Short Course projects and forward-thinking district recreation managers. (Hoecker, 1986) (Strosnider and Strosnider, 1986). Yet, what is needed is to make marketing part of our everyday thinking.

Unless marketing is made an integral part of our organization and applied to camping opportunities Forest-wide, on a systematic and long-term basis, the benefits will no doubt fluctuate based on the efforts of individual recreation managers. This recommended action plan, if adopted, could significantly effect the viability of the camping program on the Forest for years to come.

### Methodology

This paper discusses marketing orientations, describes the marketing activities, compares the market planning process to our current project planning process, and proposes four alternatives, using marketing to solve the camping use problem. The recommendations provide a Forest-wide action plan to integrate marketing activities into the current planning process.

The principles of marketing developed for this project were primarily based on two textbooks. The first, "Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations", 2nd Edition, by Phillip Kotler, offers a very extensive treatise on marketing for a vast array of non-profit organizations (Kotler 1982). The second, "Financing, Managing and Marketing Recreation & Park Resources", by Dennis R. Howard and John L. Crompton, gives a more directed look at marketing for public recreation resources (Howard and Crompton 1980). A series of articles and handouts provided by John Symes of Clemson University were also used (Symes 1986). These materials provided many insights to the examples used in this paper.

The data and research related to camping and marketing is secondary research which includes internal records, government surveys, published research, and qualitative interviews. A variety of people were interviewed, including the recreation managers and specialists on the Allegheny National Forest, several recreation managers on other forests, recreation specialists from the states of Pennsylvania and New York, local writers, and others.

# Analysis

## Marketing Orientation

Marketing is not just a management tool to be used when a problem arises and then dropped. Rather, it forms the orientation and attitude of an agency. Phillip Kotler puts it this way, "Marketing is not a peripheral activity of modern organizations but one that grows out of the essential quest of modern organizations to effectively serve some area of human need" (Kotler 1982).

Most people, including Forest Service personnel, think of marketing as advertising, selling, promotion, or public relations. This attitude toward marketing is called a selling orientation, and focuses on convincing the camping consumers to use our areas (whether the areas meet their needs or not).

Another approach which the Forest Service used in years past is called product orientation. The recreation managers decided what camping experience was best for the public and produced it. How many public involvement meetings were held when the campgrounds were being designed? Back then, Forest Service efforts went into designing facilities, managing the facilities, controlling use, protecting the resources and reducing costs.

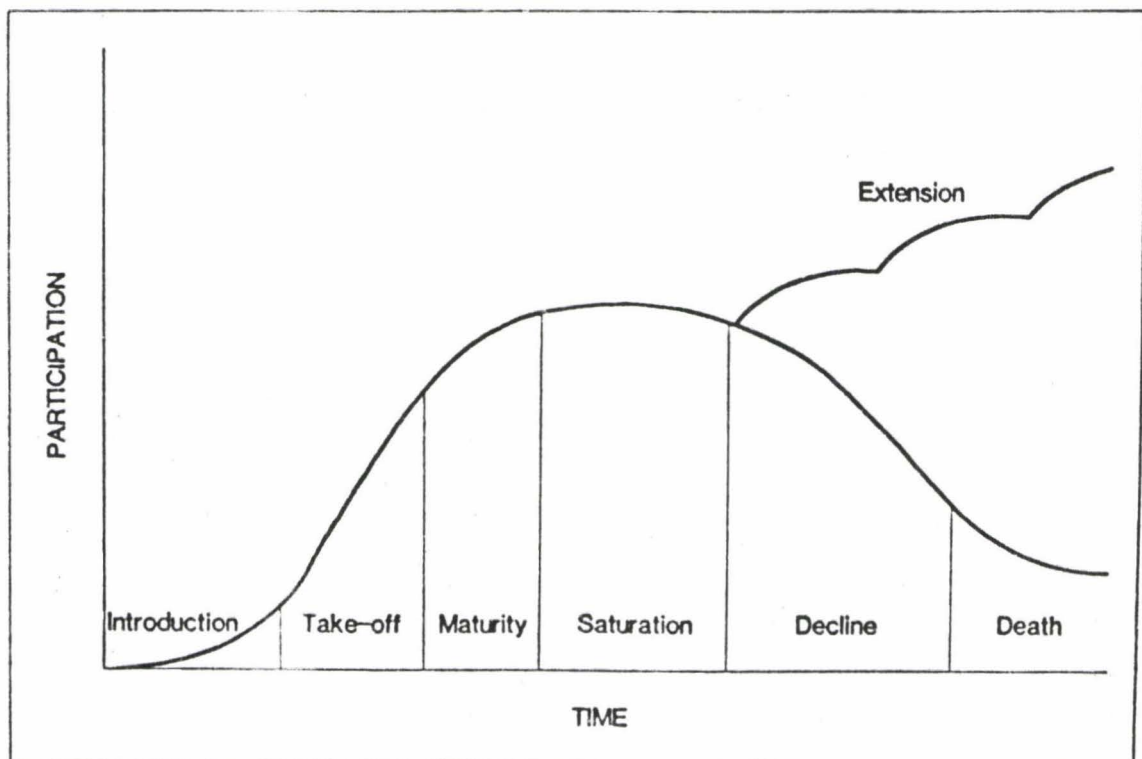
A marketing orientation is much more than either of these approaches. In this approach, the manager is oriented to the needs of the camping consumer and willing to adapt the offering to meet them. The better managers can match the offerings with consumers' needs, the less important will be the need for unusual promotion or selling techniques because the areas will "sell" themselves. Philip Kotler states that "... the main task of the organization is to determine the needs and wants of target markets, and to satisfy them through the design, communication, pricing, and delivery of appropriate and competitively viable products and services." (Kotler 1982.)



One of the benefits of a market orientation is to insure continued public support of an organization. A camping consumer whose needs are met will have a positive image of management, will return, will tell others of the positive experience, and will be more likely to support other resource programs. Any effort to impose a camping experience on consumers that is not matched to their needs or wants is doomed to failure. They are not likely to return, nor will they encourage others to visit. Over time, this could even lead to campground closure for lack of use.

Marketing can serve to extend the life of a product like camping. Figure 1 illustrates the Product Life Cycle concept of marketing. Any product, even camping, goes through various growth stages similar to the human life cycle, (Howard and Crompton 1980). Just as in human life, over time, an end or death is inevitable. Some recreation opportunities are fads and die quickly; others, like camping, span several generations. Some may never die completely but will maintain only a small, dedicated following.

FIGURE 1  
Typical Product Lifecycle Curve



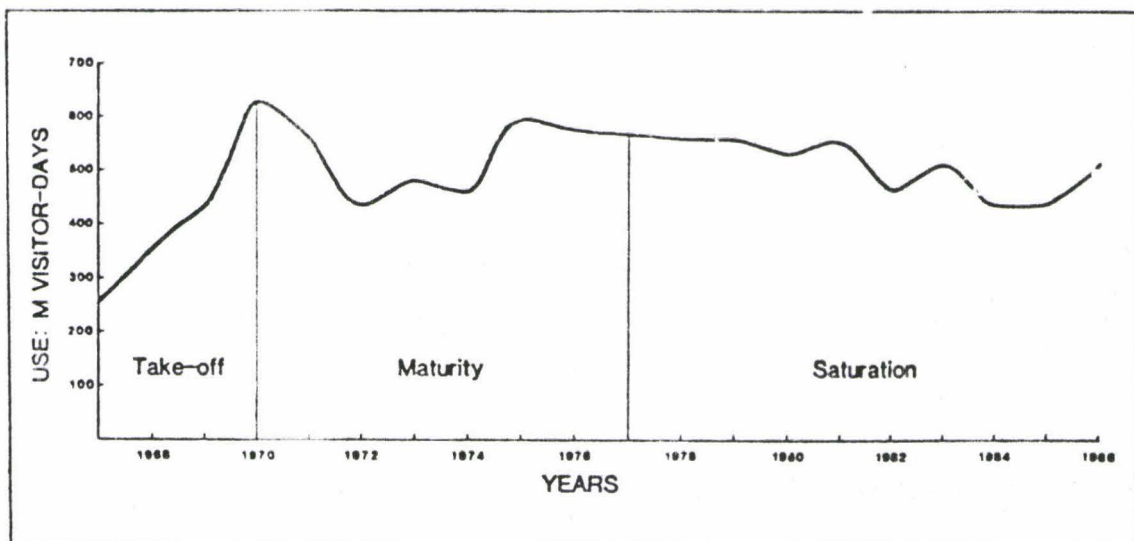
Through a market-oriented management approach, which emphasises adapting the product to meet needs, an extension of the life cycle of many products can be achieved. Howard and Crompton note that

"...recreation and park managers should thoroughly explore the potential of modifying existing programs which may be in the saturation or decline stage of their life cycle. This modification process may be viewed as extending a program's life cycle.

Modification of an existing program may require less effort than introducing a new program; it may cause less disruption to the agency and might achieve the same end result." (Howard and Crompton 1980)

As you can see by comparing the use trend curve in Figure 2 with the life cycle curve in Figure 1, the camping program on the Allegheny National Forest may be at the saturation stage of its life cycle. The time is right, and the knowledge available to implement a market-oriented strategy on the Forest and turn that trend around.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Camping Use Trend on the Allegheny National Forest**



So, marketing is management which caters to the camping consumer, instead of pushing the product. It means being adaptable, dynamic and entrepreneurial in a changing world. It describes a style of management that has a plan to measure the consumers needs and then respond with a planned set of coordinated actions designed to better serve those needs.

## The Marketing Activities

The marketing activities are the nuts and bolts of achieving any marketing objective, such as increasing use at our fee campgrounds. Figure 3 shows the flow of the major marketing activities once the Forest direction is established. The overall strategy is to design the activities which managers control (Marketing Mix) to reach and serve a particular set of potential consumers (Target Market).

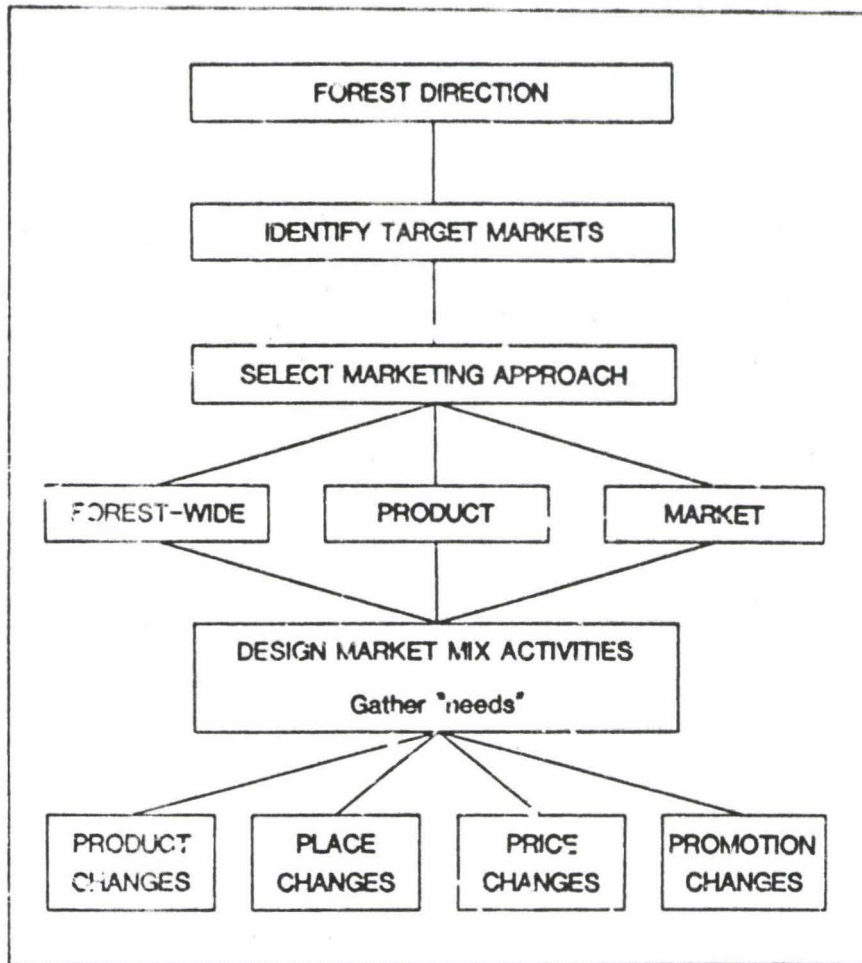
To do this managers must identify target markets, select the approach that best meets the objectives within the agency's resources, and then design the market mix to meet the needs of the consumer. The final phase of designing the market mix is where management actions are proposed that change the:

- (a) product (camping and associated activities);
- (b) place (design/location of area);
- (c) price (cost to consumer); and
- (d) promotion activities (means of communication to our target markets).

Modifications to any one or all of these variables may be necessary to better satisfy the wants and needs of the consumers. The variables are described in greater detail in section D, "Design the Marketing Mix Activities," under "The Marketing Activities".



**FIGURE 3**  
**Marketing Activity Flow Diagram**



**A. Identify Target Markets**

Before designing the marketing mix activities, the manager must know whose needs to meet. Traditionally, resource managers have designed the marketing mix to satisfy the "average user". These average users seldom exist (Crompton 1983). They may only represent the mid-point of a wide spectrum. The camping consumers of today have a wide range of needs that are often specific and cannot be satisfied with an average or standard campground product.

In fact, motivation research indicates that each person has a unique bundle of needs they expect to be met on any recreation experience (Schreyer 1986). Campers, in planning for this recreation experience, attempt to choose an activity and location where they can satisfy those needs. The National Forest could try to satisfy each camper's needs; however, this would be both impractical and uneconomical. To compromise, managers can divide potential consumers into groups with similar needs called target markets.

Target markets can be segmented or grouped using one or more variables which managers classify into four categories: (1) geographic, (2) demographic, (3) physiological, and (4) behavioristic. Table 1 shows an example of how the camping market could be segmented using a combination of these variables. As a practical matter, the manager wants market segments that:

- (a) are measurable in terms of their location, size, needs etc.;
- (b) can be reached with the market offer; and
- (c) are large enough to be worth pursuing.

Once this is done, the manager can choose which target market the marketing activities should be designed to serve.

**Table 1**  
**Example of Target Markets For Camping**

**Composition of Target Market**

- (1) Lifestyle - Physiological Variable
- (2) Demographic Variable
- (3) Geographical Variable
- (4) Behavioristic Variable

**Target Market 1**

- (1) Groups of Friends
- (2) Male
- (3) Residence <200 miles
- (4) Social/Action Motivation

**Target Market 2**

- (1) Young Couples, No Children
- (2) Male/Female
- (3) Residence <200 miles
- (4) Nature Appreciation

**Target Market 3**

- (1) Couples, Children
- (2) Male/Female
- (3) Residence <200 miles
- (4) Social/Escape Motivation

**Target Market 4**

- (1) Senior Citizens
- (2) Male/Female
- (3) Residence <200 miles
- (4) Social Motivation

**B. Select Market Approach**

Once the target markets are defined, and current camping products described, covering all possibilities, managers must decide which approach to take. The range can be illustrated with the matrix in Figure 4. Across the top of the matrix are the different campgrounds (A, B, etc.) or products. Down the side are the various potential camper groups or target markets (1, 2, etc.). Each cell formed in the matrix (A1, B1, etc.) is a potential target market/product combination that a market mix could be designed to serve.

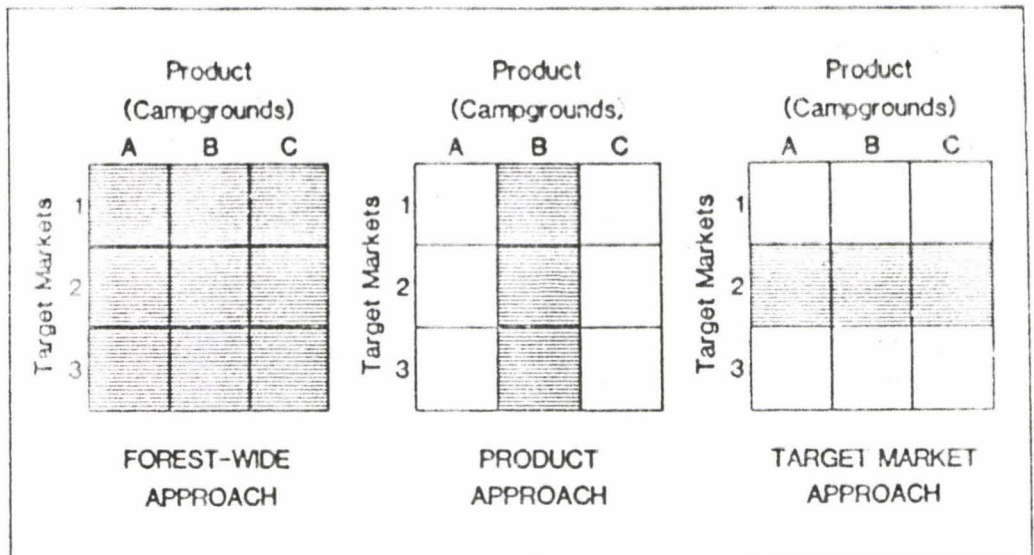
**FIGURE 4**  
**Market Mix Opportunities**

		Product (Campgrounds)		
		A	B	C
Target Markets	1	A1	B1	C1
	2	A2	B2	C2
	3	A3	B3	C3

Using the simplified matrix approach shown in Figure 4, a manager can choose any of the three general approaches illustrated in Figure 5.

1. **Forest-wide Approach:** Design one market mix for all campgrounds and target markets on the Forest.
2. **Product Approach:** Design one market mix for each campground, aimed at all target markets.
3. **Target Market Approach:** Design one market mix for each campground, focused on a particular target market.

**Figure 5**  
**Marketing Approaches**



### 1. Forest-wide Approach

Using this approach, the manager tries to develop one market mix for all the camping areas to serve all the different markets (Figure 5). This, by default, is what the Forest is doing now. The Forest's resources are spread thin and the type of information being communicated is not adequate to encourage use in any one particular area or target market. A general Forest-wide approach is not able to address all the differences and match the target markets needs with the camping product. Each campground is unique, provides different benefits and associated activities, appeals to a different clientele, and offers different resource opportunities.

As an example, if the manger decided that all campgrounds should provide more flush toilets, hot showers, and nature movies, it would probably delight the campers at Kiasutha (a large campground used by family groups with young children); however, at Minister Creek (a small more primitive area used by young couples and families with older children), this decision might actually destroy what those campers came for.



Promotional messages designed to describe all the opportunities, and sent to all potential campers, usually fail to elicit a significant response. A Forest-wide promotional message stating that we have 11 beautiful campgrounds with boating, swimming and fishing doesn't provide enough information. The potential camper can't decide where his needs would be met or even whether they would be met.

The Forest-wide approach does not seem too practical or beneficial in meeting the users needs.

## 2. Product Approach

In this approach, the Forest manager develops a market mix for each campground, but designs it to appeal to all the target markets (Figure 5). This, too, has some of the same problems of the Forest-wide approach because the needs of the target markets are different. Trying to design a camping experience to satisfy all is difficult, if not impossible. The risk is great that it will not satisfy any particular group of campers and the declining use trend may continue. This approach, however, does allow the market mix to be designed to communicate the differences of each campground and the benefits offered. Then the target markets decide, by trial and error, which is most desirable for them.

## 3. Target Market Approach

Here, managers focus attention on one target market in each campground or in a group of similar campgrounds. The market activities are designed to meet the needs of one target market (Figure 5). Management concentrates on producing a quality experience for the target market.

The different needs of other possible consumers are not excluded, as opportunities to fulfill their needs can be provided at other campgrounds on the Forest or by private operators.

Using this approach will result, in the long run, in more needs being met at a quality level. This should expand total use to a much greater degree than is possible with either of the other approaches.



### C. Establish Analysis Priority

Once the decision is made as to which overall approach to adopt, managers must establish the priority and then schedule the marketing mix analysis. Based on the overall objective of increasing the use at the existing fee campgrounds, the criteria to establish priority would be:

- (a) severity of the problem (decline in use);
- (b) potential contribution to objective (increasing use);
- (c) potential cost or effects;
- (d) existing clients sensitivity to any changes.

Using these criteria, analyzing the potential to increase use during the extended season at Red Bridge by adjusting the promotional activities may rate a higher priority than adding a swimming beach at Willow Bay. In other cases, the current market mix may be meeting the campers' needs, so the priority for analysis would be low.

### D. Design Market Mix Activities

Once the approach is selected, the market mix activities can be determined. These are the actions the Forest can take in relation to the product, the place, the price, or the promotion to better serve the needs of the target markets. To complete this task requires a thorough understanding of the market's needs. Data should be summarized from all public involvement, camper comments, recreation research and market studies.

Designing the activities would best be accomplished with a team effort composed of recreation specialists, district managers, engineers, public affairs specialists and others. It would begin with a complete understanding of the Forest Plan and manual direction, the current situation, and information on the needs and wants of the target markets. It may also require public involvement. All proposed actions must be coordinated with other resource activities and objectives in the area.

Product, place, price, and promotion variables are convenient categories for the activities that management controls. The product and place variables primarily deal with the physical attributes of the campground. The price and promotion deal with the non-physical.

## 1. The Product

The camping product includes the physical objects, services, persons, places, and ideas offered. Each campground has a certain style, combined with certain features, and quality of service and materials. An important part of the product offered is the opportunities that augment the basic camping experience. These augmenting benefits, such as a motor-boating, water-skiing, swimming, hiking, or scenic features, often distinguish one campground from another. An example of the current "product" offered at four areas on the Forest is displayed in Table 2 (next page).

The idea in this step of the process is to modify or add to these current characteristics, based on the needs of the chosen target markets. For instance, to accommodate the desires of families with young children, a playground may be added next to the beach area.

In a different example, if the target market were adult male groups of friends, management may suggest an extended season, adding a vault toilet, winterizing one water faucet, and adding a fish and game cleaning station.

Capital improvements are not the only aspects to consider. Other features, such as Camp Stamps and Campground Hosts are part of the product offer, too. If the target market desires to learn more of the local attractions, inexpensive cassette tapes describing these attractions could be loaned to campers.

Quality of service and materials are important to today's campers. Research indicates that recreational satisfaction among campers is responsive to improved quality management. Increased satisfaction results in more frequent and longer stays, (LaPage and Bevins, 1981). Adjustments in the service activities should be considered.

Changes in the basic product offer are generally expensive and usually do not show immediate results in increasing use. However, the adaptations will often pay off in the long run. The changes will potentially satisfy more needs and add to the overall depth of the benefits offered.

**TABLE 2**  
**Product Summary Table**

CAMPING PRODUCT OFFER	CAMPGROUNDS			
	Kiasutha	Loleta	Minister	Tracy
<u>CAMPING STYLE</u>				
Camping	*	*	*	*
Forester/Natural Setting	*	*	*	*
Privacy between Sites	*	*	*	*
Spacious, w/Sun & Shade	*	*	*	*
Flush Toilets	*			
Hot Showers	*			
Paved Roads	*	*		*
Vault Toilets		*	*	*
<u>CAMPING FEATURES</u>				
Campground Host	*	*	*	
Camp Stamps	*	*	*	*
Extended Season		*	*	*
<u>CAMPING QUALITY SERVICE</u>				
Security Checks	*	*	*	*
Garbage Cans/Dumpsters	*	*	*	*
Daily Maintenance	*	*		
Camping Supplies < 2mi.	*			*
<u>AUGMENTING BENEFITS</u>				
Swimming	*	*		
Motor-boating	*			
Water-skiing	*			
Canoeing	*			
Stream Fishing		*	*	
River Fishing				*
Lake Fishing	*			
Walking Trails		*		
Day Hiking Trails		*	*	*
Interpretive Trails	*			*
Environmental Programs	*	*		
Unique Feature Viewing	*		*	
Bicycling				
Team Sports	*	*		
Playgrounds	*			
Picnicking	*	*		
Scenic Drive	*			
Trophy Fishing	*			
Fall Color Viewing		*	*	*
Hunting Small Game		*	*	*
Hunting Big Game		*	*	*



## 2. Place

Place refers to the physical location and design of the campground. Since the objective is to increase use of existing campgrounds, the location is set. However, the design of the campground is a variable we can modify. This may closely relate to the campground style, but how we categorize these factors is unimportant. What's important is that they are considered and designed with the needs of the target markets in mind.

The layout of campsites, roads, and support facilities can be important and lead to greater user satisfaction, (Cordell and James 1972). Consider the desire of target markets for views from the campsite, privacy, amount of sun or shade, campsite facility arrangement, vehicle space, safety needs, preferences in colors and materials, etc. An example of this is the recent response by the Bradford District to user desires for safety. Speed bumps were designed to slow traffic in the campground loops, thus making it safer for young children riding bikes, as well as people walking.

## 3. Price

Pricing strategies can be modified to encourage use, discourage use, or recover certain costs. Changing the standard fee is not the only option. Discounts or allowances could be used to entice longer stays or use during mid-week. For instance, the fee could be reduced by \$2.00 for stays of more than four days, or we could offer a free day for every five paid weekdays. This may not work if the target market is not economy-minded. It may only end up reducing the income. The key is to know your target market and their needs and desires before blindly implementing any activity with the intention of increasing total use.

Current pricing strategies are based on comparison with the local private campground industry. The fee is set at a level commensurate with the amount of services offered. Within some campgrounds a premium fee (\$2.00 increase) is charged for lake-front campsites, based on the perceived higher value and demand for these sites by the market. Fees have risen sharply since the 1970s but

have remained stable or been reduced slightly over the last three years. This does not seem to have effected the total use trends. Use has been on a slight decline before, during and after these fee changes.

#### 4. Promotion

Promotion is basically the activity of communicating messages. The idea is to modify the existing tools and messages to the target market, and to communicate the benefits offered. The tools include:

- (a) advertising (brochures, maps);
- (b) sales promotion (coupons, free goods),
- (c) personal selling (service club talks, sport shows, boat shows)
- (d) publicity (public service announcements, articles)

The appropriate mix of these tools should be sought to reach the consumer with a message appropriate to their stage of knowledge. Four states of knowledge are important:

- (a) Unaware stage - does not know camping exists here.
- (b) Aware stage - knows camping exists but knows nothing about it.
- (c) Knowledgeable - has some knowledge of the area and opportunities available. (May have visited.)
- (d) Desirous - heard of the benefits, knows what areas may meet expectations and plans to visit. May have visited.

Messages should be designed to move the potential customer into the next stage. These messages seek to either inform, persuade, or remind. Informing is important at the unaware stage, which is usually during the early stages of a product's life cycle.

In the late '60s and early '70s, when many people were barely aware that camping opportunities existed in the area, informing was important. As camping grew into the maturity stage of its life cycle, more potential campers became aware that opportunities exist here. Then, persuasion became important because the market wanted more information about the benefits. Reminder messages reinforce knowledge of these benefits to previous visitors.

A 1978 national camping survey indicated that, of all U.S. households, 23% were active campers, 27% were temporarily or permanently inactive. Only 6% indicated a moderate-to-high desire to try camping, (LaPage and Cole, 1979). Based on this fact alone, messages to persuade and remind active and inactive campers of the benefits of camping, have a better chance to increase use significantly than messages aimed at the small group of potential first time campers.

The current communication tools used by the Forest are maps, directories, brochures, and some personal contacts and published articles. The messages generally seek only to inform visitors of camping and recreation opportunities, when they should be designed to persuade or remind the user of the potential benefits.

For example, assume the target market for increasing use at Kiasutha during mid-week is families with children. One of the communication tools to be used is a personal contact at the Pittsburgh Boat Show. Because most of the potential camper/boaters would probably be aware of camping and boating opportunities on the Allegheny, a display and brochures would be designed to persuade or remind them about the benefits of camping at Kiasutha. Covered items could include the modern clean facilities, lakeside sites, large reservoir with miles of boating, launch near campground, great waterskiing, uncrowded conditions during weekdays, swimming, grassy beach, playgrounds for the kids, the chance to fish and possibly catch a trophy, etc.



Directories and lists of other Forest Service facilities and opportunities may be available, but would not be the primary emphasis of this communication event. A video could be used with scenes of camping environment and boating activity in the area. For inducement to take action, a coupon for 50% off one night of camping during the week could be given out.

Promotion activities vary in cost and time invested; but often, if planned well, result in immediate response, thus increasing use. This use may not be sustained over time, however, without continued communication with the target markets.

## Market Planning Process

Market planning doesn't just happen. To implement the set of marketing activities described above to increase use in the fee campgrounds, a process must be developed that will be simple enough to follow and "fit" into the organization's current planning systems.

Integrated Resource Management (IRM) is the current planning system designed to identify the best projects or management activities to implement the Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1986).

The IRM planning process has six basic steps, not including the initial phase of Understanding the Forest Plan and the final phase of Monitoring and Evaluation.

- \* Understand the Forest Plan: Summarize Forest Plan direction, existing data and planning records.
- \* Step 1 - Opportunities: Identify the areas of land with the best opportunities to implement the Plan.
- \* Step 2 - Analysis: Interdisciplinary (ID) Team identify and analyze projects to implement the Plan.
- \* Step 3 - Schedule: Schedule and budget the most effective projects.
- \* Step 4 -Design: Design projects.
- \* Step 5 - Execute: Complete projects as designed.
- \* Step 6 - Protect and Manage: Protect and maintain resources and investments.
- \* Monitor and Evaluate: Monitor progress and evaluate changes needed or revisions of Plan direction.

Table 3 compares the market activities and IRM planning process steps.

Table 3  
Marketing Activities and IRM Planning Process

<u>MARKETING ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>IRM PLANNING PROCESS</u>
Forest Direction -----	--- Understand Forest Plan
Identify Target Markets---	
Select Marketing Approach ----	Step 1 - Opportunities
Design Market Mix Activities -	Step 2 - Analysis
	Step 3 - Schedule
	Step 4 - Design
	Step 5 - Execute
	Step 6 - Protect & Manage
	Monitor and Evaluate

The two planning processes appear to parallel each other in many respects. In either process the Forest Plan sets the overall direction. Background data, planning process records, etc., must be summarized, along with current research data related to camping.

In IRM, the publics and their needs are identified initially from Forest Plan records. For the purpose of marketing, a finer breakdown is needed of the potential camper groups or target markets in the fee campgrounds before the Forest Service can move to the next step.

Selecting the marketing approach is similar to Step 1 - Opportunities, as they both identify the most likely areas to meet resource objectives and schedule them for analysis. Both Step 2 (Analysis) and designing the market mix involve an ID Team identifying projects or management actions to meet the objectives or opportunities identified. The remaining steps (3-6) are necessary to carry out planned projects. Monitoring and evaluation are very important in both cases to determine success and the necessity of further actions or revision of planning direction.

# Implementation Alternatives

## Description

We developed four alternatives to carry out marketing to increase camping in the fee campgrounds on the Allegheny National Forest. Each was designed to be implemented over the first decade of the current Forest Plan (1986 - 1996).

### Alternative A

Adopt a market orientation and a target market approach in each campground. Integrate the development of the market mix into the IRM process by adding one or more campgrounds to the surrounding Opportunity Area. Revise the membership of the Opportunity Area Interdisciplinary (ID) Teams to include the skills needed to address the market mix analysis.

### Alternative B

Adopt a market orientation and a modified target market approach for a group of campgrounds. A market mix would be developed for a group of similar campgrounds, like the Allegheny Reservoir campgrounds, and focused on meeting the needs of one target market. This is a combination of the Forest-wide and Target Market Approach. Each group of campgrounds would become a new opportunity area in the Step 2 analysis, and be scheduled along with the others. A special ID Team would be identified, made up of the recreation, marketing, engineering, administrative, and other resource skills needed to develop the market mix.

### Alternative C

Take basically the same orientation and approach as Alternative A, but do only two or three high priority campgrounds on the Forest. Treat each campground as a new opportunity area in Step 2 analysis. Set up an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team with the necessary skills to develop the market mix. Evaluate the results and make decisions on remaining campgrounds during the next decade.



## Alternative D

This is the "no action" alternative. The current Forest-wide approach will continue, along with a product orientation. Changes will be made, but usually as a response to outside pressure, either from the public or within the organization. In-depth analysis will depend on the individual efforts of district recreation managers in the IRM process or through special projects.

## Alternative Considered but Eliminated

Other alternatives, such as a selling orientation or the use of a product approach, were considered but deemed ineffective in attaining the objective of increasing use.

## Evaulation

The alternatives were evaluated on eight criteria (see Table 4). Each alternative was rated on the amount of change from the current condition that would be produced if the alternative were implemented. The plus signs indicate the relative degree of increase that can be expected; the minus signs indicate the relative amount of decrease. A zero indicates no change is expected from the current condition.

Table 4  
Alternative Evaulation

CRITERIA	ALT A	ALT B	ALT C	ALT D
Camping Use	+++	++	+	-
Camper Satisfaction	+++	++	+	-
Revenue	++	++	+	-
Public Support	++	++	+	-
Other Resource				
Coordination	+++	+	+	0
Planning Costs	+++	++	+	0
Implementation Costs	+++	++	+	0
Agency Morale	-	+	++	-

# Recommendations

Based on the understanding of marketing activities, the alternatives, and their relation to the current project planning process, the following recommendations are made.

## Recommendation 1

Adopt Alternative B with an orientation to the consumer to arrest the decline of camping use on the Forest. Integrate the market planning process with the existing IRM project planning process by setting up each group of similar campgrounds as a unique opportunity area. The action plan in Table 5 is recommended. (See next page.)

This alternative would have the best chance of increasing use significantly over the long term at a reasonable cost. Cost is reduced by grouping similar campgrounds, yet the market mix is focused on the needs of a particular target market. This is usually most effective in generating use and user satisfaction. In the long run, this would build public support and trust in our management abilities.

Alternative A was not chosen because developing the market mix for each campground (assuming a team of five people spending about four weeks), is more than current budgets and personnel could handle. With the amount of change now occurring throughout the organization, an effort of this magnitude might decrease morale. On the other hand, Alternative B, with a moderate effort spread over several years could (if successful), increase morale because of increased job satisfaction.

Alternative A is most costly to implement as each campground would have a unique set of marketing activities. Also, combining the market analysis of a campground with an opportunity area analysis would encumber a now complex process with neither benefiting in the end. Treating the market analysis as a unique "opportunity area" with a specially chosen ID Team, as proposed in Alternatives B and C, is likely to be more successful.



**TABLE 5**  
**Marketing Action Plan for Increasing Use at Fee Campgrounds**

<u>IRM STEP</u>	<u>TASK DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>WHEN</u>	<u>APPROVAL</u>
	1. Management Team select a marketing task team to summarize existing camping situation. Recommend that Assistant District Rangers and SO Recreation Specialist be members.	Management Team	5/15/87	Forest Supervisor
1	2. Complete camping situation analysis include: camping style, features, associated activities, issues, summaries of camper comments, use trends, financial trends, and Plan direction.	Task Team	6/30/87	
1	3. Set specific Forest objective for increasing camping use in the existing fee campgrounds under Forest Plan and Manual direction over next 10 years.	Management Team	7/30/87	Forest Supervisor
1	4. Select and describe target markets for camping on the Forest.	Task Team	8/30/87	
1	5. Recommend how to group campgrounds by similar characteristics and target markets to achieve the objective set in Task 3.	Task Team	8/30/87	
1	6. Incorporate marketing opportunities into IRM Step 2 by adding campground groups as unique OA's. Establish priority for analysis.	Task Team	9/15/87	District Ranger
1	7. Schedule highest priority campground OA('s) for analysis in 1988. Schedule other campground OA's by end of 1990.	Management Team	9/30/87	Forest Supervisor
2	8. Complete the design of marketing activities as scheduled and under the guidelines of IRM Step 2. (Includes environmental analysis, public involvement and NEPA documentation if necessary.) Propose the most efficient management actions and projects to be implemented over the next 10 years to move towards the objective.	Opportunity Area Inter-disciplinary Team and District Ranger	As Scheduled	Forest Supervisor
3	9. Enter capital investment projects into forest-wide pool, schedule and budget most efficient to meet Forest objective. District Ranger implement the operation and maintenance actions.	Management Team	As Scheduled	Forest Supervisor
4-6	From here on, all projects follow the same process of design, execute and manage.			

Alternative D was not chosen because of the expected decline in use. Users' needs are not as likely to be met with the Forest-wide approach -- at least not at a quality level. Over time, this approach will result in lack of public support and poor employee morale, as more dissatisfied users result.

Alternative C, although it provides some positive benefits, is somewhat of a bandaid approach. It would fix the worst areas and let the rest go. The remaining campgrounds, although not a significant problem now, will soon become problems if ignored. This represents more of a defensive strategy and does not integrate marketing as an orientation of management. It is only a tool to be used and dropped when not needed.

#### Recommendation 2

Over the next two years, approve and schedule the following training in marketing for at least recreation specialists and staff personnel:

Self-Study - Read all articles and books contained in the bibliography related to marketing by December 31, 1987.

Workshop - Attend workshop on Understanding Marketing and Marketing Activities put on by the Recreation Staff prior to developing the first marketing plan for a campground.

Formal Training - Attend National Forum on Marketing Leisure Services, sponsored by the National Recreation and Parks Association, in the Spring of 1988.

Marketing is a complex management science. It is new and misunderstood by most Forest Service people. To effectively and efficiently implement marketing, training is necessary.

#### Recommendation 3

Every two years, conduct the Campground Satisfaction Survey developed by Wilbur LaPage and Malcolm I. Bevins. This survey can be contracted out. To be consumer-oriented, we must have a method of monitoring and assessing user satisfaction for quality control and identifying the specific needs of the camper market. Although

this survey does not indicate the exact management problem, the category of dissatisfaction may be identified. Analysis of camper comments may provide clues to the required changes.

Used in concert, these recommendations can revitalize our camping program. The time is right, and the techniques are available. With the increased flexibility we'll experience because of the Project Spirit program in Region 9 and the enhanced national interest in outdoor recreation brought about by the President's Commission On Americans Outdoors, there will be many opportunities to demonstrate improved professional expertise in "Caring for the Land and Serving People".

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